7. Health

There do not appear to be free health facilities available at the camps and the "doctors" practising, both Afghani and Pakistani, charge fees. A chemist/dispensary selling medicines was observed at Camp-el-Jadid. Most patients go to Sorhab Goth and Al-Asif Square to be treated.

The more common illnesses reported amongst children are diarrhoea and upper respiratory tract infections, and amongst adults chicken pox and "fever".

A free clinic previously run by Jamiat-e-Islami in Al-Asif Square has been closed due to lack of resources.

There appears to be low immunization coverage among Afghan refugee children and mothers.

8. Education

It was observed that efforts were being made to establish and run schools in areas of Afghan refugee concentrations, both by local Pakistani welfare agencies as well as Afghan Mujahideen groups.

The Jamiat-e-Islami runs 18 schools in Karachi in which 4500 children, both boys and girls, are enrolled. No school fees are charged, and all resources and materials are supplied by the Jamiat.

The children are taught all subjects in Persian and are also examined in Persian and Pashto. Some children speak Urdu, although they are not taught the language formally.The teachers of a school visited explained that in order to maintain the language and culture children are taught in Persian (11).

The teachers have to follow certain quota hours per subject, as prescribed by the Jamiat-e-Islami office in Peshawar, which in turn follows the "Afghanistan Syllabus".

The Hizb-e-Islami also runs schools and 2000 children are enrolled in these. There are also a few madressahs run in masjids,controlled by Afghan Mujahideen where English is also taught.

Some children enrol in Pakistani private schools after Grade five (ages 9-10). However, most of the refugees cannot afford the fees charged at these schools.

(11) In Al-Asif Square, two schools were visited. In the girls' school, 110 children were enrolled and attended in two shifts. Some pupils were able to read Urdu due to its similarity in with Persian script. There were three teachers for the morning shift and three for the afternoon shift. In the boys' school, 500 children were enrolled who also attended in two shifts.

9. **Family Size and Cultural Environment.**

Afghan refugee families are large, often with dependents other than the nuclear family. These include widows and orphans of men killed in the war.

Circumstances appear to be forcing many Afghan women to change their traditional roles and take up income-generating activities (12). The cramped spaces of their homes was often seen to be utilized in the production of handicraft items and machine embroidery for sale in the markets.

The homes appear to have bare essentials even in the better-off areas, and because Afghan families tend to congregate together, few people have felt the need to learn Urdu, including many men. Afghan traditions are followed closely and even children born in Pakistan sometimes interact little with people outside the Afghan refugee circles, especially females.

Few refugees spoke of encountering hostility in Karachi and expressed their gratitude to the government and people of Pakistan for allowing them safe refuge.

(12) During the visit to Al-Asif Square, many women including the daughters of the Amir, were witnessed at work, though in their own homes.

10. Housing

Accommodation for refugees ranges from apartments in Al-Asif Square to mud huts in the camps.

The apartments in Al-Asif Square consisted of two rooms and a hallway and kitchen. There were about five floors to each block, each floor housing four flats.

The houses at Camp-el-Jadid were built out of sand blocks and had tin sheetings to serve as roofs. There were no doors as such and the doorways were marked with jute or cotton curtains. The rooms were neat and laid out with dhurries.

The most common problems encountered are shortage of water and electricity. A five-inch thick water pipe served approximately 3,000 households, only a fraction of the total population at the camp.

11. The Myth of Return

In general it appears that Afghan refugees still want to return to Afghanistan "at the right time". Many expressed the wish to attain martyrdom in the path of establishing a free Islamic state in Afghanistan. However, realities indicate a vicious cycle; Afghan refugees continue to leave Afghanistan due to the destruction and severely curtailed economic opportunities; because Afghans continue to leave their country, the economic conditions continue to become worse. Thus the "right time" for return may never be.

However, some return was reported by the Jamiat-e-Islami. They claim that 5,000 families from Pakistan have returned to the provinces of Badakhshan and Takhar and the Nooristan area, which were taken back from the Soviet troops, over the last year (13). It appears that some families from the richer provinces (Helman and Qandhar) have returned, but there is little reported return to Kunduz, the Panjshir valley or the Eskamesh area of Takhar.

In the meanwhile, the myth of return continues to be nourished: children are taught in Persian and are prepared to take examinations of Afghani boards of education, they are brought up with the ideas of eventual return, and homes are set up as if the inmates are ready to pack up and leave at any moment.

The seriousness of return can also be gauged by the fact that many Afghan families, particularly the Persian-speaking ones, have not even considered obtaining Pakistani ID cards and passports, when they can do so without too many problems.

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(13) It was reported that, between 1989-91, 25,000 Afghan refugees returned to Afghanistan. However, it cannot be certified that they all returned to Afghanistan - they may have trickled into Karachi.

12. Conclusion

Increasingly the idea of return is being related to the economic conditions of Afghanistan by Afghan refugees, and since the prospect is not visible in the immediate future, it can be quite safely assumed that no major move of Afghan repatriation can be expected, at least not from Karachi.

Afghan refugees have been attracted to Karachi mainly because of the economic opportunities it offers and because an Afghan family's chances of survival and establishment are high in its cosmopolitan environment. There are indications that while Afghan migrations into Quetta and Peshawar are decreasing, migration into Karachi (both from other cities and directly from Afghanistan) is increasing. This was categorically stated by the Amir of the Jamiat-e-Islami, the largest mujahideen group in Karachi, and is clearly visible in the city. There is, however, a lack of primary documentation about this stream. The Jamiat-e-Islami welfare office does not maintain systematic records and there are no known records with any civic agency in the city. The ration cards provide by the government of Pakistan cover a very small percentage of refugees and are, in any case, not being issued for new arrivals, even if they reside at the camps. So, while the stream of new arrivals is definitely increasing it is, at the moment, difficult to quantify. Initial exploration provided in the study suggests that this stream is not likely to diminish in the near future and large proportions of Afghan refugees are likely to remain in Karachi as permanent settlers.

Given that Afghan refugees in Karachi are concentrated in certain areas (of which at least six camps are known) and that an estimated 84% are in camps, it would be feasible to carry out an in-depth study to further explore the issues outlined in this report. The important indicators and proposed outline of this possible in-depth study are discussed in Annex 5.

Annex 1

Visit to Al-Asif Square

It was observed that there was a buzz of activity at Al-Asif Square. There were many stalls selling fruit and vegetables, handicrafts and clothing items. There were also proper grocery and general stores run by Afghan refugees.

Children were seen going to school and some women, fully clad in burqa, were seen going about their business. Visiting the welfare office of the Jamiat-e-Islami, which assists newly-arrived families in finding accommodation and jobs and also makes funeral arrangements for the deceased, photographs of men martyred in the war were seen displayed on the walls. The headmaster of the boys' school explained that apart from the traditional subjects, the students were also taught about war, martyrdom and concepts related to freedom fighting etc. It was observed that some boys displayed a keen awareness and desire to fight for Afghanistan and attain martyrdom.

The home-based units visited appeared to be organized small-scale factories in which industrial-type sewing machines were installed. The women working on embroidery included girls as young as 10 years of age.

The overall sanitary conditions in Al-Asif Square seemed poor, with water flooding the landings of the blocks of flats and household rubbish being piled up on ground floor. The apartments and the work units visited were relatively cleaner. It could be seen that the home of the Amir of Jamiat-e-Islami refugees was furnished with the minimum essentials. However, lush carpets were laid in one of the rooms, and some electrical goods were seen. The women and children of the household seemed well-nourished and jolly even while narrating their sojourn in different camps and cities in Pakistan and the plight endured. They all expressed their wish to see Afghanistan free in order to return. However they were reluctant to send the men of the household to fight. Some families have been living in Al-Asif Square for five years.

Annex 2

Visit to Camp-el-Jadid

The camp was built on barren land on the outskirts of the city. The approach to the camp was via narrow and dusty roads. Initially, only men were seen in the camp, and the women encountered were in burqa and were going to a clinic at Sorhab Goth.

There was a central lane within the camp where several shops had been set up by the Afghan refugees. These included a tailor, a chemist, a secondhand-clothes dealer, fruit stalls, a dry-cleaner and a general repairs workshop. A ditch alongside the shops served as a rubbish dump.

A lot of children were seen, either loitering or playing in the sandy ground. Many of these children worked as loaders at the markets in Karachi.

The elders of the community highlighted that of the many problems they had, lack of water was the most serious. A five-inch thick water pipe served only a fraction of the total number of households in the camp. One of the elders said that he settled any disputes that arose within the community at the camp.

The houses were built out of sand blocks and had tin sheetings to serve as roofs. There were no doors as such and the doorways were marked with jute or cotton curtains. Inside one house visited, women were busy making carpets on handlooms and preparing food on single stoves. The rooms were neat and laid out with dhurries. Some jute charpoys were stacked away.

Annex 3

List of Respondents

Name	Designation	Organization
Mr Aleemuddin Pathan	Senior Reporter	Dawn
Mr Talat Aslam	Deputy Editor	Herald
Mr Zafar Abbas	Senior Reporter	Herald
Ms Zahira Ahmed	Assistant	Newsline
Refugee 1 (man)	Factory worker	S Jinnah Colony
Refugee 2 (child)	Paper collector	S Jinnah Colony
Ataullah	Helps run school	S Jinnah Colony
Refugee 4	Sells dry fruit	S Jinnah Colony
Refugee 5	Brings water	S Jinnah Colony
Qazi Abdurrazzaq	President	Jamiat-e-Islami
Haji Amir Mohammad	Vice-President	Jamiat-e-Islami
Jamil Ahmed	PA to President	Jamiat-e-Islami
Zubair	Student, translator	Jamiat-e-Islami
Haji Saifullah Khan	Officer-in-charge	Jamiat-e-Islami
Hakimullah	Driver	Jamiat-e-Islami
Abdul Wasir	Headmaster	School, Al-Asif Sq
Soraiya	A refugee	Al-Asif Square
Her mother	A refugee	Al-Asif Square
Fauzia	A refugee	Al-Asif Square
Worker #1	Fur unit	Al-Asif Square
Worker #2	Embroidery unit	Al-Asif Square
Mohammad Azim	Student	Al-Asif Square
Mohammad Tahir	Molvi, Judge	Camp-el-Jadid
Ghulam Mohammad	Malim, teacher	Camp-el-Jadid

Annex 4

List of Places Visited

Place	Type of Organization
The Herald	Newsmagazine
The News	Daily newspaper
Shireen Jinnah Colony	Refugee camp
Jamiat-e-Islami	Afghan Mujahideen Group
Al-Asif Square	Welfare Office of the Jamiat-e-Islami
Al-Asif Square	Home-based work unit dealing in fur products
Al-Asif Square	Home-based work unit dealing in embroidery
Camp-el-Jadid	Refugee camp

1. Introduction

Afghan refugees form the largest group of refugees in the world, with a quarter of Afghanistan's total population (about seven million), living as refugees in other countries.

There are estimated to be 3.7 million Afghan refugees in Pakistan (1). These are concentrated largely in the provinces of NWFP (2.2 million) and Balochistan (0.35 million) and increasingly in the metropolitan city of Karachi. Although individual Afghan families have reportedly settled all over Pakistan, concentrations of Afghan refugees have not yet been reported from rural Punjab or the interior of Sindh.

Although the matter has yet to be researched systematically, there are indications that Afghan refugees are steadily moving towards Karachi from other parts of Pakistan and that, increasingly, refugees are arriving directly from Afghanistan into Karachi, without first going through the more usual routes of camps in and around Quetta and Peshawar.

The main attraction of Karachi is the same for Afghan refugees as for other foreign refugees (ie Bengalis, Biharis, Thais, Burmese etc) and Pakistani migrants from upcountry: it provides economic and social opportunities for survival.

Karachi is essentially a city of migrants, which gives it much vitality and absorption capacity. In the case of Afghan refugees, many thriving businesses (hotels, cloth and merchandize trading, shops in fashionable areas etc) and countless smaller enterprises have become visible parts of the city's commercial landscape.

The following sections pinpoint, wherever possible, the magnitude and nature of the Afghan refugee presence in Karachi.

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(1) Shujaat U, Asking for Shelter, Weekend Magazine, The News, 10-16 Jan 1992, p14.

Annex 5

In-depth Study of Afghan Refugees in Karachi.

Since Afghan refugees live overwhelmingly in extended family units, a family survey is suggested. The following indicators may guide the survey:

- Age
- Sex
- Ethnicity
- Language(s)
- Origin (city, province)
- Skills
- Employment (in Afghanistan, other area of Pakistan and Karachi)
- Earnings (in Afghanistan, other area of Pakistan and Karachi)
- Education (level)
- Language(s) of education
- Local exam/ Afghan exam
- Health services (Afghan? Local?)
- Immunization status
- Physical/other impairments
- Nutritional status
- Areas of stay since arrival in Pakistan (and duration at each place)
- Areas of stay since arrival in Karachi (and duration at each place)
- Visits to Afghanistan (number)
- Reason for visit (war, economical, other)
- Intention to remain in Karachi? Pakistan?
- Return to Afghanistan- if? when?
- Relatives in Karachi
- Ration card?
- Who helped on arrival?
- Why came to Karachi?
- Infant mortality- under 1, under 5
- Maternal mortality
- Where are children born? Hospital? Dai? Home?
- Family Planning?

Each survey form (to be developed later to incorporate indicators) will contain one section for information on <u>each</u> individual in the extended family (for example, age, sex, origin, ethnicity, education level, employment, earnings etc) and another for information for the family unit as a whole (housing, sanitation etc). The form will be devised and precoded to facilitate data entry and tabulation on computer. The analysis will then focus on providing answers to questions such as the following:

- What is the general rate of increase in Afghan refugee population in Karachi?

- What proportion of the Afghan refugee population arrived in Karachi in the past year?

- What proportion wish to go back?

- What proportion is employed in a particular employment?

Refugees can be analyzed by age group, sex, ethnic background, time of arrival, employment etc, as required.

The strategy to be adopted and coverage will depend on the defined purpose of the survey, the scope and extent of information to be obtained, the relationships to be established and the available finances.

The survey may be based on one or two concentrations of Afghan refugees (and a ten percent sample taken), on all the known camps, or spread out over all the known concentrations, in which case sampling would have to be more random.

The indicators would have to be further developed with UNHCR once the purpose is established. They will define the boundaries of information to be obtained.

Those indicators will then be converted into a draft questionnaire (likely to be a survey form) that will be pretested, reviewed and finalized.

A team of data collectors (male and female, speaking Persian, Pashto and/or interpreters) will then be trained to fill out the survey form. They will be overseen by trained supervisors who will determine the units that fall within the sample during the fieldwork.

The data collected will be fed into a computer programme that will be specifically written for this survey. Tabulation and graphic representations will follow and data analyzed in a narrative report.

It is suggested that the work of Pierre and Michelene Cenlivres, Swiss anthropologists who have studied Afghan refugees in depth (as pointed out by Mr Phillipe Labreveux of UNHCR, Quetta), be obtained and consulted.

A formal project proposal will be developed on obtaining terms of reference and indicators for the in-depth study.

Bearing in mind the aforementioned facts it was realized that although every one (refugees) was deadly homesick a number of them expressed their intention for repatriation. They will probably return after Ramazan (March, April 1993) to Kunduz and Baghlan provinces via Peshawar. The remaining will certainly stay here up to the "appropriate time". According to them yet there is time and great deal of patience must be demonstrated to servive and keep their "honour" protected. Those going to the North take the route via Peshawar and returnees to the South-West will go through Quetta.

Being aware of the fact that UNHCR provides returnees with repatriation grant, they requested that all of them should avail from the assistance whenever they want to go. Although the team consistently tried to refrain raising any such point which would create expectation but discussion about repatriation plan virtually and literally meant something for the refugees.

Their wishes and desires were more than those in NWFP and Baluchistan.

SUGGESTIONS:

As 90% of refugees in Karachi have no intention of resettlement in Pakistan and all despairingly willing to return subject to a positive change in Afghanistan. Therefore, option for assistance programmes must be kept open.

The rational/feasible approach in assisting these refugees may be in the form of transportation of their families and their personal effects upto their areas of origin.

We shall keep in mind that there are some vulnerable groups who might need other assistance in their areas of origin (shelter). apart from transport.

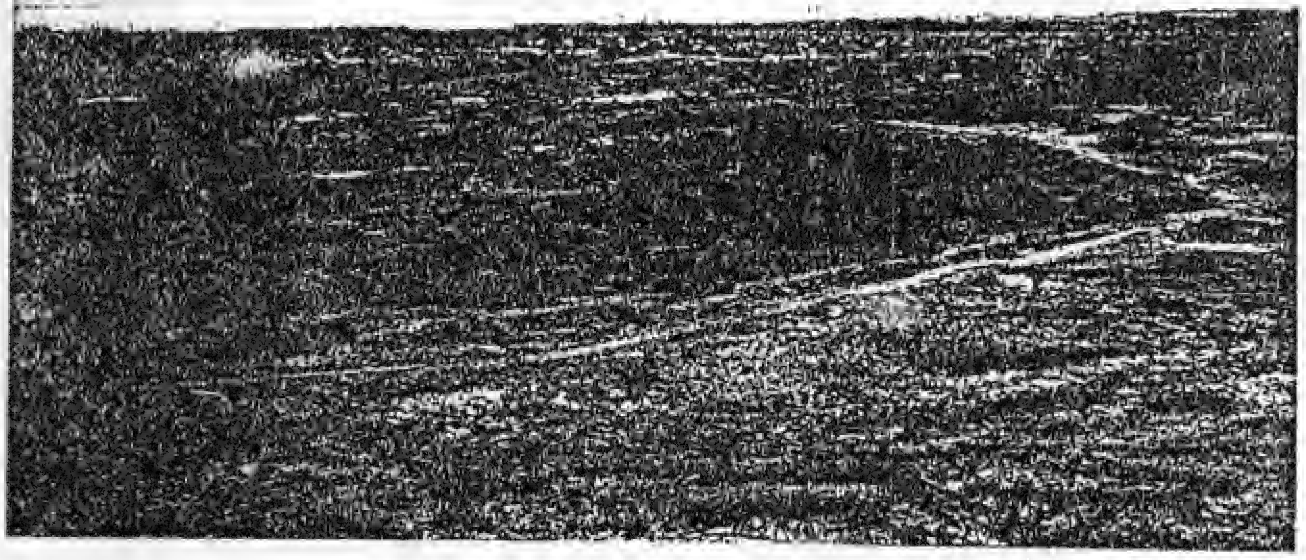
Since more and more families are continuously pouring in from NWFP and Balochistan RV's and the political conditions are changing, such a survey should again be conducted before the onset of the coming summer.

There should not be any discrimination in assisting the refugees in transportation to different parts of Afghanistan as otherwise could be blamed for just working for refugees from the north. Also no political parties should be involved in the assistance programmes for these refugees.

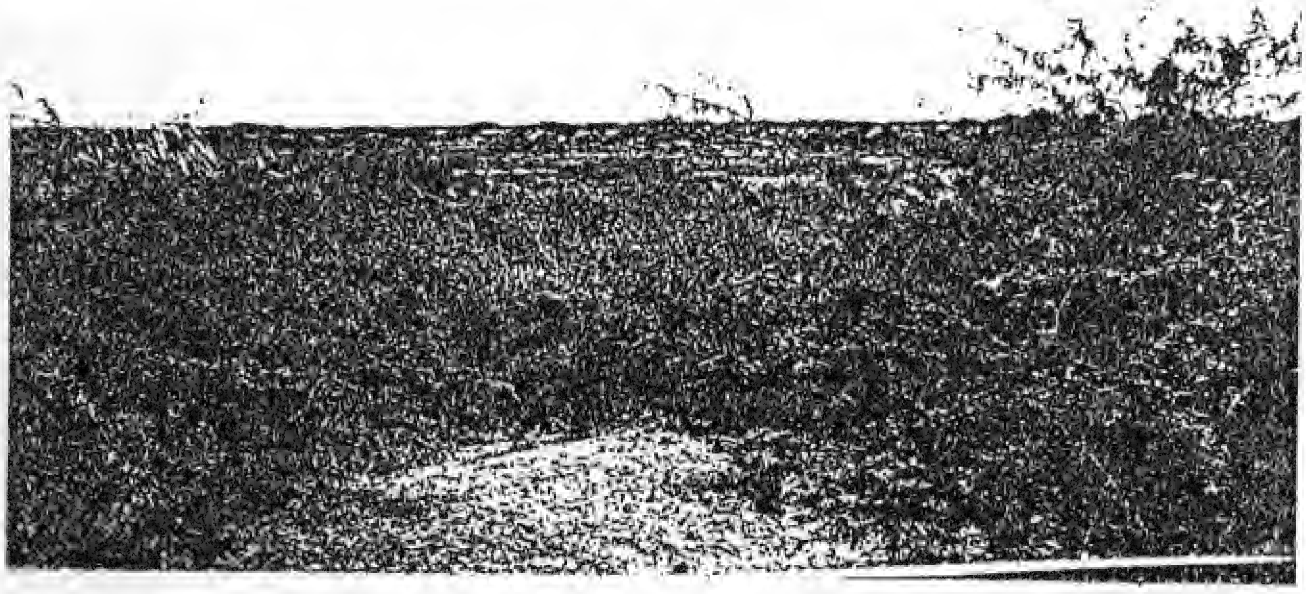
Repatriation Section,
UNHCR SOQ

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[SURVEY]



A view of Kikar Colony



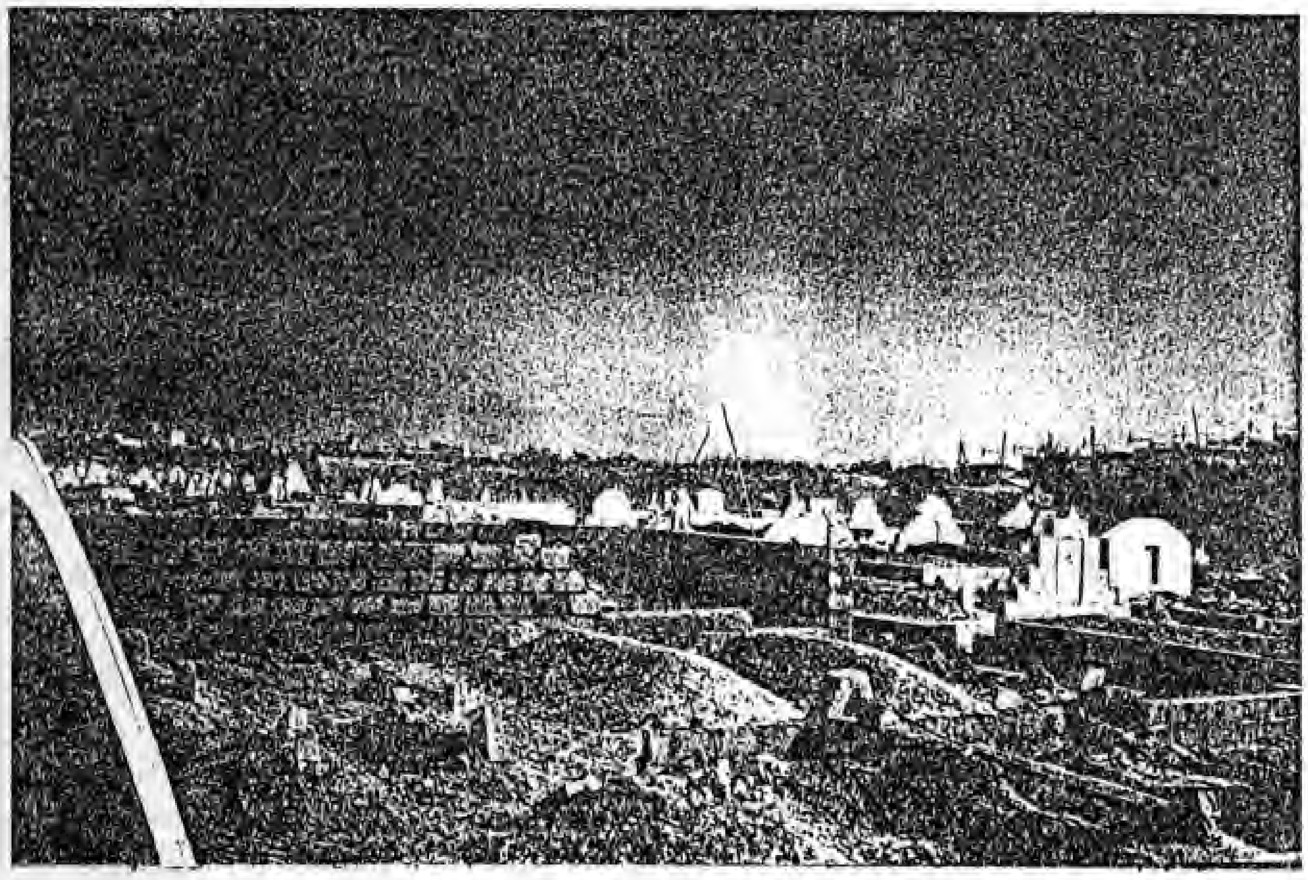
A view of Kikar Colony



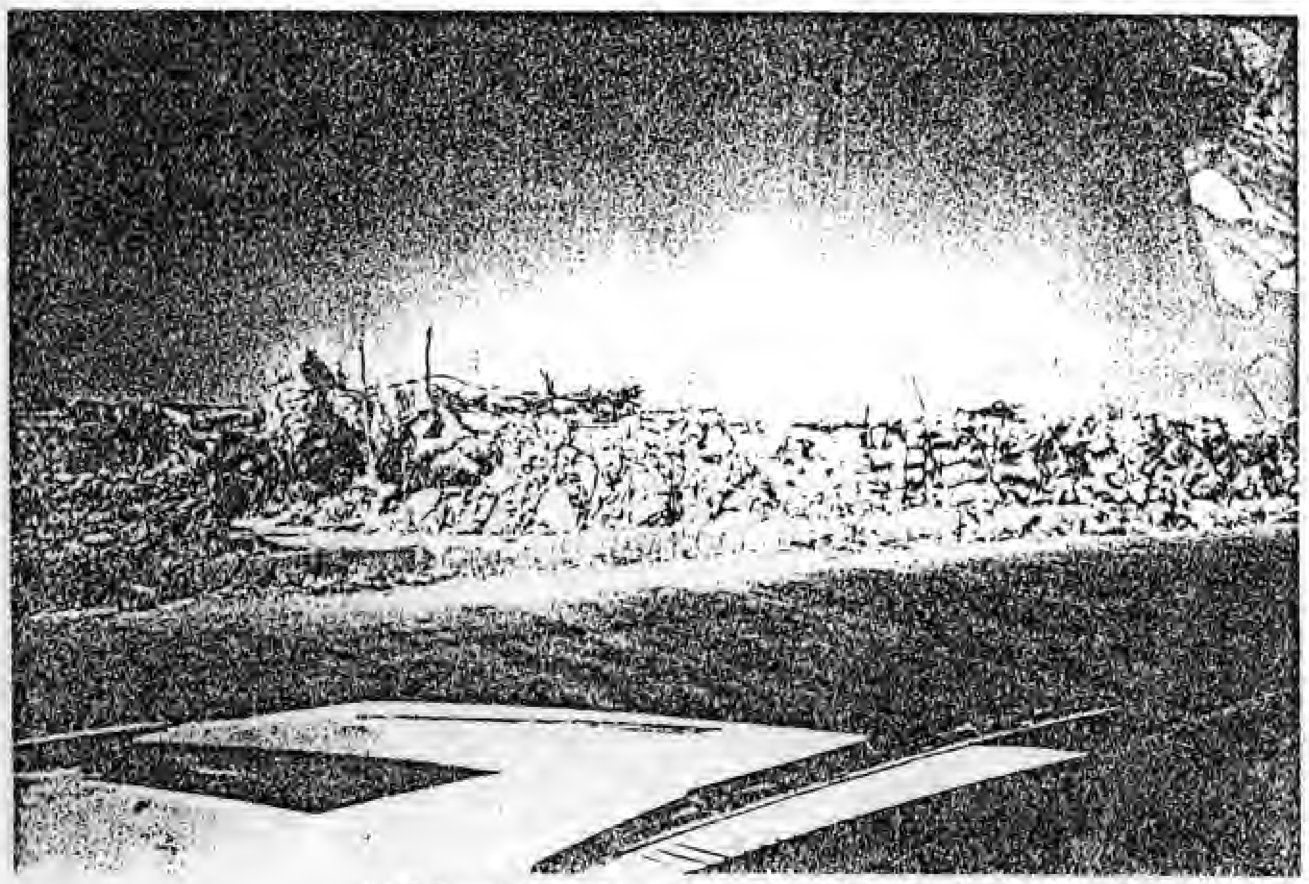
A view of Jangabad RV



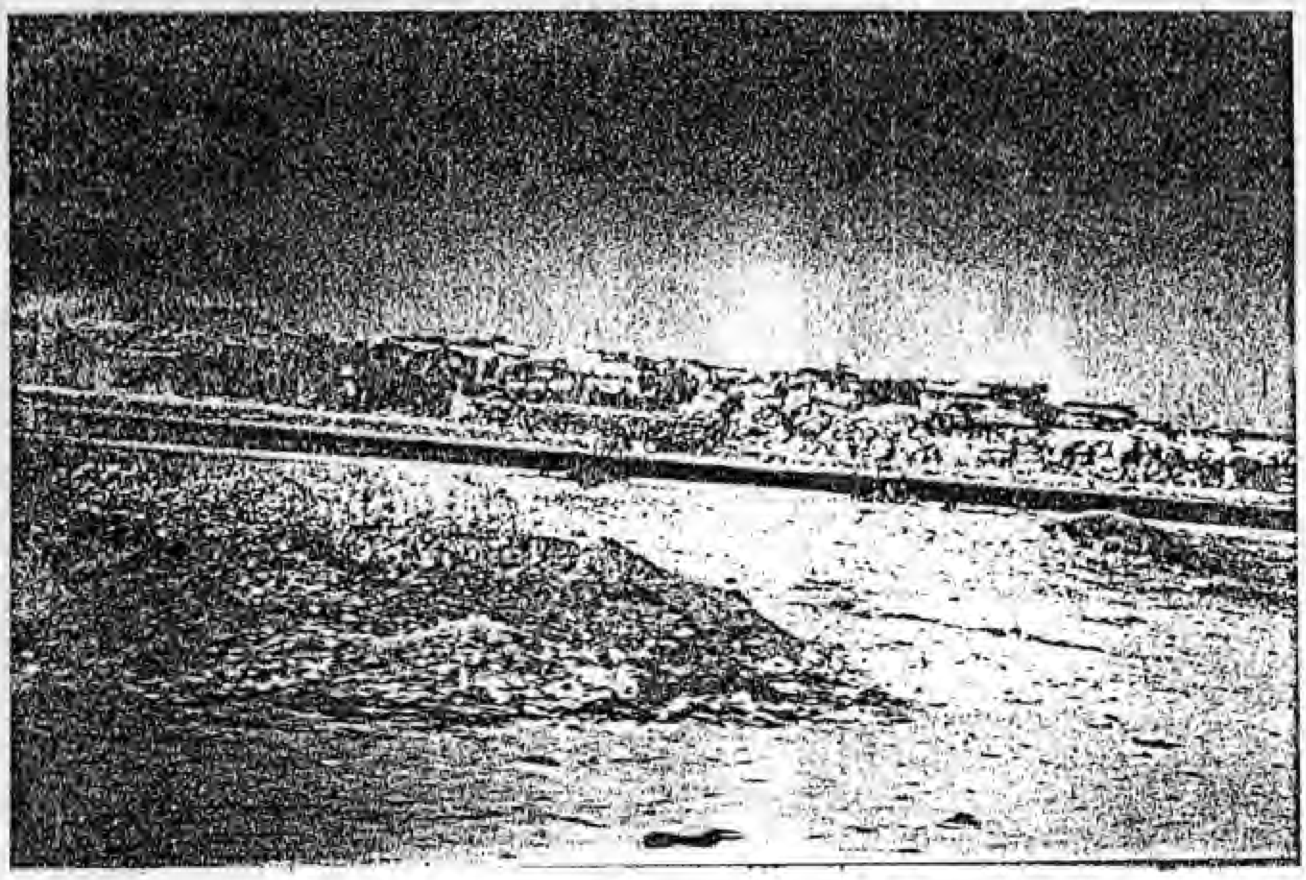
A view of Jangabad RV



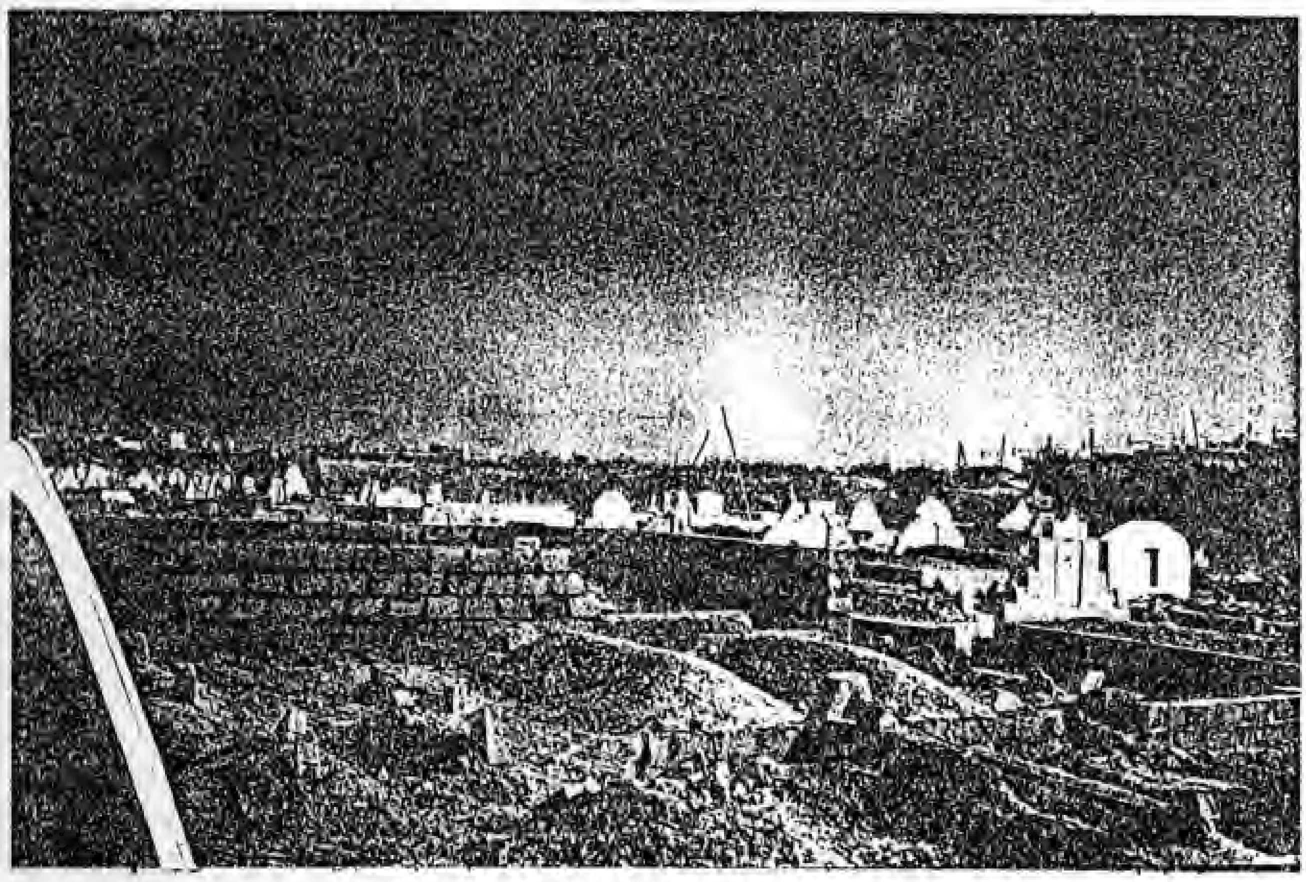
Refugees' graveyard



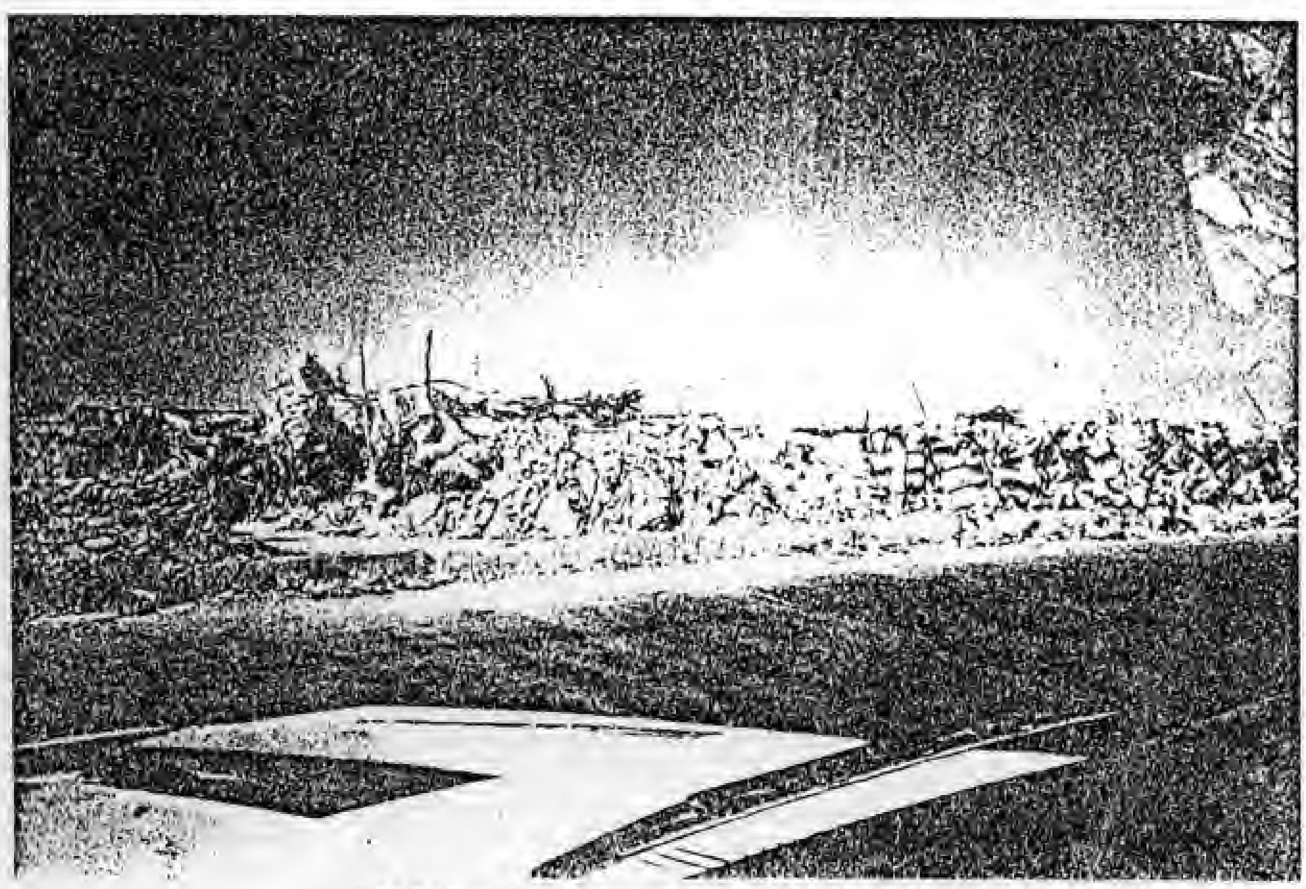
Collecting waste plastic & paper, refugees' busi
in Karachi



A view of Jangabad RV



Refugees' graveyard



Collecting waste plastic & paper, refugees' busi
in Karachi

2. The Afghan Refugee Routes to Karachi.

There are essentially three routes used by Afghan refugees in moving to Karachi: through Peshawar, through Quetta and direct to Karachi (see map 1).

Interviews with Afghan refugees (2) show that those who have been here the longest (eight or more years) came originally to Peshawar, then usually tried their luck in Islamabad, Rawalpindi and sometimes Lahore, and then settled in Karachi.

Those that arrived four to seven years ago usually came after spending an initial period in and around Quetta. At present approximately 350,000 refugees are reported in refugee villages in Balochistan, of which 80% are Pakhtoons. The number in Quetta itself may well be over 100,000 (3).

The most recent arrivals, those who have left Afghanistan barely two years ago came directly to Karachi, having been told by relatives that in Karachi they may find a livelihood.

A welfare office run by the Jamiat-e-Islami at Al-Asif Square, an area of low middle class Afghan concentration on the outskirts of Karachi, reported five to six Afghan families arriving daily from Afghanistan (4). Each family has between 7-12 members.

It appears to be usual for refugee families arriving in Karachi to contact one of the many offices maintained by various Afghan political and mujahideen groups, in particular the Jamiat-e-Islami and the Hizb-e-Islami. The welfare offices of these groups then guide families either to camps around the city or other areas of refugee concentration, depending on the means of the refugees. Often the welfare offices provide some assistance to destitute families out of their own resources.

The better-off Afghan refugees often bypass the camps and welfare offices and make their own way. They are scattered all over the city, in the better residential areas or blocks of flats. The numerical strength of this segment of the Afghan refugee population in Karachi is very difficult to estimate.

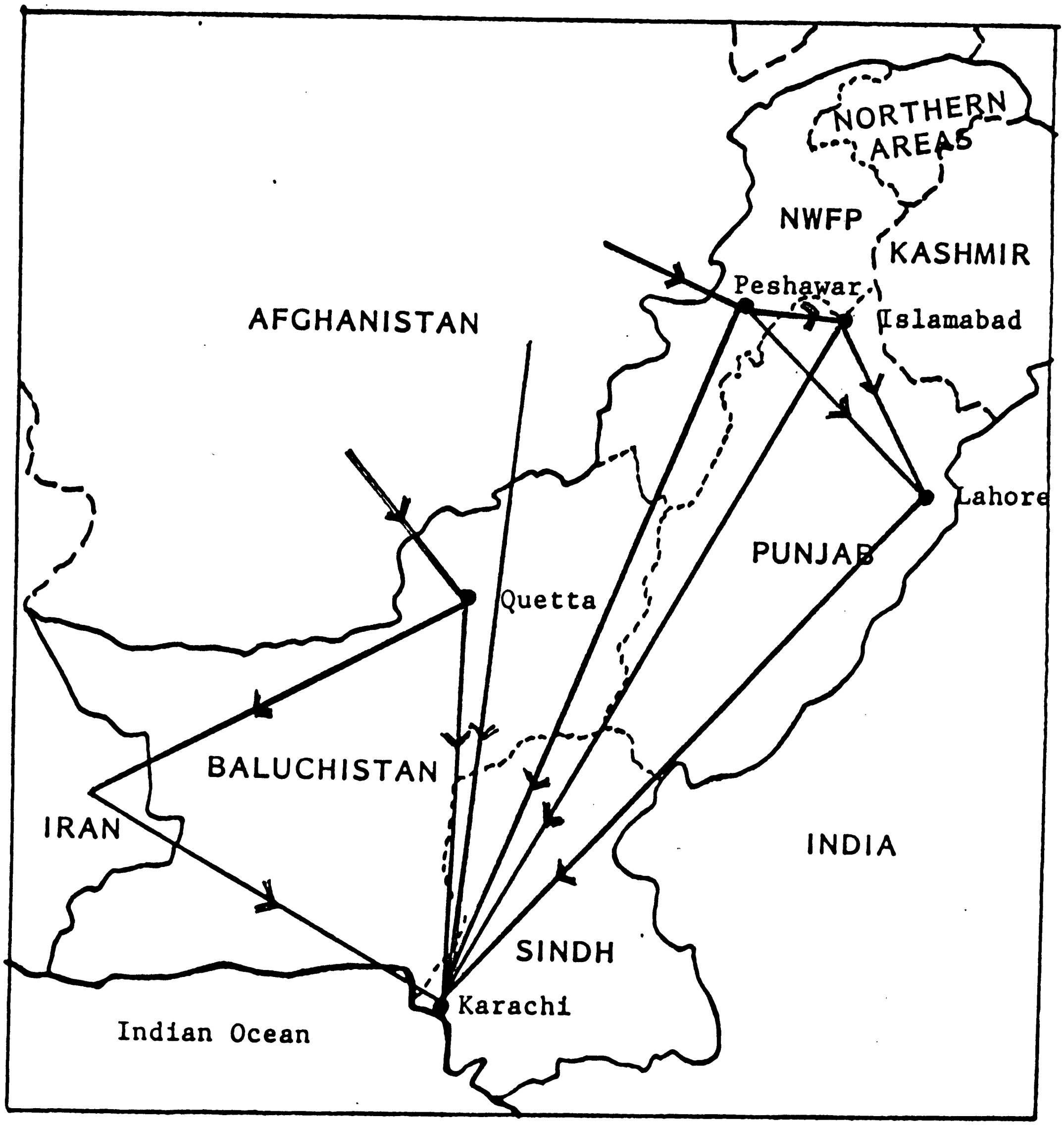
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(2) Residents (both men and women) of Al-Asif Square, a concentration of refugees on the outskirts of Karachi.

(3) Figures supplied by Mr Philippe Labreveux, Head of Sub-Office, UNHCR, Quetta. According to local officials there are 40,000 families in Pakhtoonabad, many if not all of them Afghan. Another 45,000 persons (Turkman, Uzbeks, and some Pakhtoons) live in tented camps and the rest are scattered elsewhere in Quetta.

(4) Information provided verbally by volunteers who run the welfare office. Written records are not maintained.

AFGHAN REFUGEE MOVEMENT TO KARACHI



Arrows indicate approximate direction of movement only, and do not depict geographical routes

3. Areas of Afghan Concentration in Karachi.

A string of camps along the Super Highway stretching between Sorhab Goth and Toll Plaza have been established. Of these the largest is Camp-el-Jadid (largely Persian and Turkish speaking) with refugees coming from the northern provinces of Afghanistan. This is followed by smaller camps at Jangabad, Masjid Bokhari, Mominabad, Nawabad, and Qayumabad. A new one (no name) has recently been established for mainly Pakhtoon speaking refugees that are coming directly from Afghanistan.

Apart from the string of camps, refugee families concentration are all in middle class, lower middle class and working class areas in certain localities, in particular Sorhab Goth, Nazimabad, Gulshan-e-Iqbal and North Karachi (with the exception of two areas, one near the airport and another in the south of the city). Of these concentrations, the one at Al-Asif Square (Sorhab Goth) with 1800 families is the focal point of Afghan refugees. Here an entire residential area (small flats) has been taken over by Afghan refugees (bought, rented or simply taken over). In the same way isolated housing schemes (for example Maymar complex) along the Super Highway have, in the same way, been appropriated, a majority being Persian speaking refugees (5). The camps appear to be unauthorized.

Better off Afghan refugees are scattered in other blocks of flats and apartments through Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Nazimabad and other residential areas in the city.

A detailed breakdown follows, based on estimates provided in secondary data (6) and information provided by the Jamiat-e-Islami.

Since figures were normally given for number of families, a multiplier of 8 has been used to obtain approximate population.

Area of Concentration	**Approximate Population**
Al-Asif Square	15,000
Camp-el-Jadid	160,000
Smaller camps along Super Highway:	240,000

(5) Two of these sites (Al-Asif Square and Camp-el-Jadid) were personally visited by the research team on three different occasions.

(6) Sources of information include the Herald, Newsline, and Dawn.

Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Gharibabad, Housing Complexes in Sorhab Goth	24,000
Shireen Jinnah Colony	8,000
Swat Colony	16,000
Others(Lyari, Orangi)	16,000
New camp (no name)	8,000
Total	487,000

(See map 2 for locations)

However, it may be noted that figures do not include the upper and some middle-class families settled all over the city. The actual total is likely to exceed 550,000 (7).

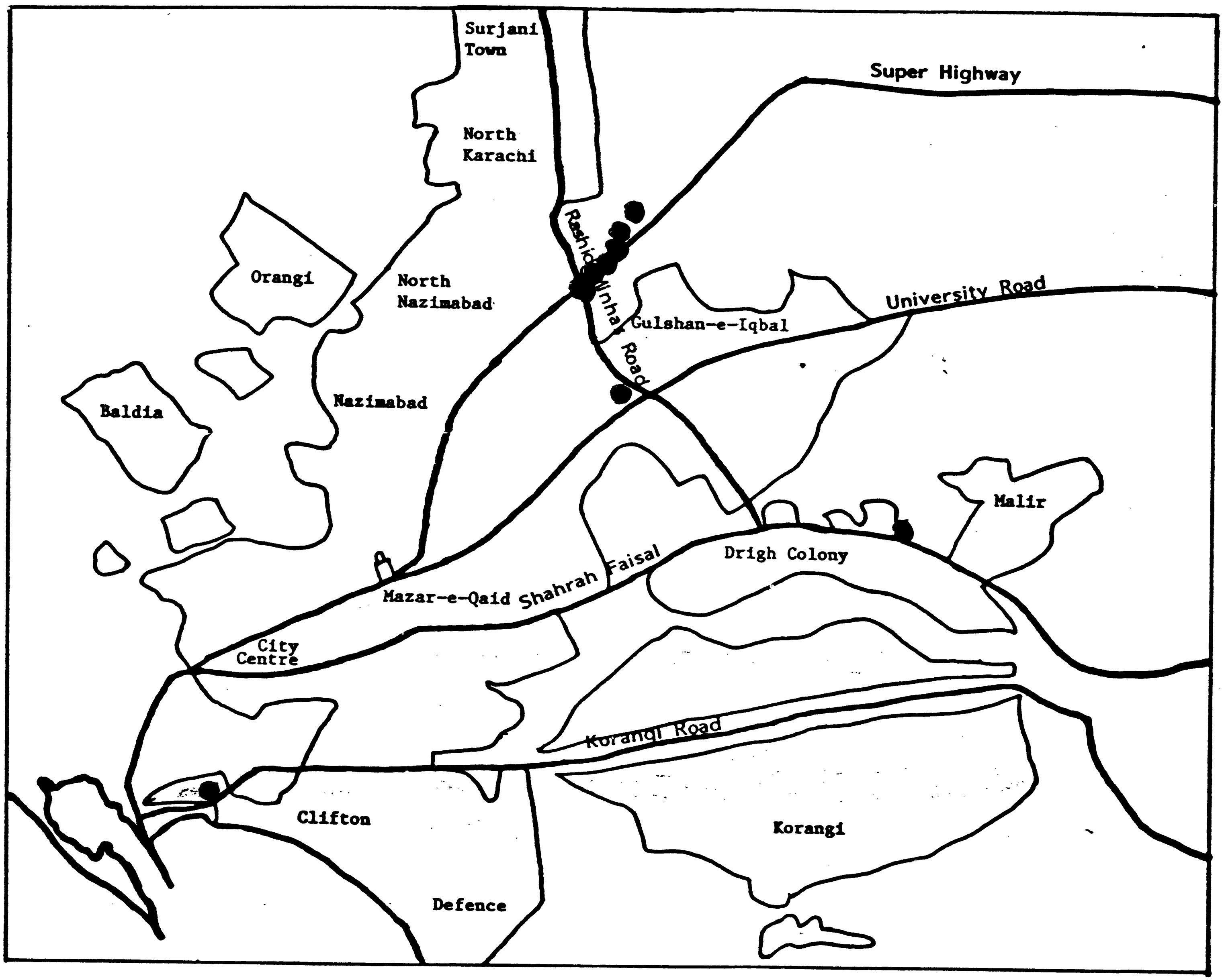
It can be seen from the above figures that the vast majority of Afghan refugees (84%) live in camps.

Of all the areas, Camp-el-Jadid forms the largest area of Afghan refugee settlement. The camp lies at a distance of approximately 15 km from Sohrab goth and Al-Asif Square and is on barren ground. There are approximately 20,000 households in the camp and out of these ration cards have been given to 3000 households by the government of Pakistan.

The ration is distributed four times a year. By far the most pressing problem is the lack of water. There are no health centres at the camp and refugees have to go to Al-Asif Square to get private treatment.

(7) It should be noted that since little documentation is maintained by civic agencies or Afghan groups and since the influx is largely "illegal", these figures cannot be considered fully reliable.

A MAP OF KARACHI SHOWING AREAS OF AFGHAN REFUGEE CONCENTRATIONS



Built-up Area

Afghan Refugee Concentrations

4. Ethnic Composition

Although a mixture of ethnic groups is apparent there appears to be a preponderance of Persian-speaking refugees, at least at the camps.

Their origins are reported to be from Badakhshan, Kunduz, Takhar (including Eskamesh) and the Panjshir and they are apparently mainly Tajiks and Pakhtoons. The languages spoken are Persian, Pashto, Turki and Uzbeki (8).

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(8) The refugees visited at Al-Asif Square were largely Persian-speaking, while those at Camp-el-Jadid spoke Persian and Turkish.

5. Settling Down in Karachi

It takes approximately three years for an Afghan family to establish itself in Quetta (9). It appears to take much less time in Karachi, particularly for single young men who can find work usually as labourers and factory workers.

The process of settling down is usually accompanied by the dictates of self-styled camp leaders who are usually people that have managed to develop some formal or informal links with the Pakistani bureaucracy and the commercial establishments. They act as brokers in obtaining jobs, rations (supplied by the Government of Pakistan) and opportunities.

Afghan refugees have established a network of contacts that enables them to participate in the commercial life of the city. They are, therefore, able to assist newcomers in settling down. For example, the Jamiat-e-Islami leadership based in Gulshan-e-Iqbal and Al-Asif Square runs its own fleet of 70 buses (which it owns) between Camp-el-Jadid and Korangi (one of Karachi's major industrial areas) daily to take workers to factories.

On the whole, Afghan refugees keep a low profile and often pass themselves off as Pakhtoons from NWFP. That is why many prefer to simply arrive in Pakhtoon areas and mingle with the local population, rather than make contact with other Afghans. Given the corruption within the government system, it is then easy for them to obtain Pakistani ID cards and Pakistani passports and become bona fide Pakistanis.

From financial aid that originates often in the Middle East, Afghan Mujahideen groups (like Hizb-e-Islami and Jamiat-e-Islami) are often able to provide subsistence, and sometimes financial assistance (about Rs 800-Rs 1000) to newcomers. In addition the Jamiat-e-Islami office in Karachi has a monthly budget of Rs 25,000 which is assigned to education and medicines. However this aid was reportedly dwindling, so that increasingly newcomers have to fend for themselves.

(9) Mr Phillipe Labreveux, Head of Sub-Office, UNHCR, Quetta.

6. Income and Employment

It is difficult to ascertain employment rates amongst the refugees, as these are different for different locations. Whereas most people in Al-Asif Square are employed, overall employment appears to be low in the camps (10). Employment is also reported to be higher among those that have settled among Pakistani Pakhtoons.

Many Afghan refugees have entered the transportation business and they now own fleets of vans and buses which are run on local routes. Other jobs include working in diesel engine workshops (owned by refugees) around Al-Asif Square and dealing in the dry-fruit and carpetmaking business. A refugee factory worker can earn the same as his Pakistani counterpart (between Rs 1000-4000/month) depending upon his skills and overtime. Those who have some funds open up grocery and general stores as well as shops in commercial areas trading mostly in clothing and fabrics. Afghan refugees have also been reported to bring in marble and diamonds from Afghanistan and to be involved in buying and selling arms, but little evidence of this was visible in the areas visited.

Most women do not work and although they have certain skills they do not seem to have entered the workforce in significant numbers. Children also work, mainly as loaders in fruit and vegetable markets and selling iced water or food items.

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(10) During the visit to Al-Asif Square several work units were witnessed, of which one was an organized workshop for producing fur products and another a home-based work unit producing embroidered cloth on machines. It appeared that there was a bustling market within the square where home-spun dhurries and other handicrafts were being sold. In Camp-el-Jadid, women were witnessed at work on handlooms making carpets within their own homes.

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RAASTA

AFGHAN REFUGEES IN KARACHI: A PRELIMINARY EXPLORATION

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AFGHAN REFUGEES IN KARACHI: A PRELIMINARY EXPLORATION

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